

MERCED COUNTY

2019 Homeless Count and Survey Report

2019 Merced County Homeless Subpopulation Survey

Today's Date: _____ Name of Interviewer: _____ Location: _____

Name: _____ Merced County 2019
City or Area: _____ Zone (if applicable): _____

Questions: (NOTE: If person is sleeping or you feel unsure ONLY complete gray shaded questions.)

1. Did you sleep outdoors, in an abandoned building, tent, canopy, or vehicle last night?
yes no (If no, stop asking questions)

2. What is your gender? Male Female Transgender Non-Conforming (i.e., not exclusively M or F)

3. Are you Hispanic or Latino? yes no don't know refused

4. What is your race? African American or Black American Indian or Alaskan Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (Hmong, Cambodian, Taiwanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)

5. Are you...
for the first time during the past 12 months?
refused
for the first time during the past 12 months?
refused
lived on the streets or in abandoned buildings for the past year or more?
refused
lived on the streets at least 4 separate times in last 3 years?
refused
length of time for these occasions at least 12 months?
refused
the U.S. Armed Forces or called into active duty in National Guard or a
refused
ever said you have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?
refused
ability? yes no don't know refused
tal disability? yes no don't know refused
problem that limits your ability to live independently?
refused
or indefinitely? yes no don't know refused
problem that limits your ability to live independently?
refused
indefinitely? yes no don't know refused
Diabetes, heart trouble, high blood pressure, seizures, ulcers, or arthritis? yes no don't know refused
indefinitely & impede your ability to live independently?
refused
were admitted to the emergency room or hospital? yes no
for HIV? yes no don't know refused
partner? yes no don't know refused
you are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence,
\$251-\$500; \$500-\$1,000; more than \$1,000
months? yes no don't know refused
yes no don't know refused
no don't know refused

6. Do you have children under the age of 18 who are
homeless and/or living with you on the streets today?
refused
7. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you
today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

8. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

9. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

10. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

11. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

12. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

13. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

14. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

15. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

16. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

17. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

18. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

19. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

20. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

21. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

22. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

23. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

24. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

25. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

26. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

27. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

28. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

29. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

30. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

31. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

32. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

33. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

34. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

35. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

36. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

37. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

38. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

39. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

40. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

41. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

42. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

43. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

44. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

45. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3-Asian; 4-Hispanic/Latino; 5-Other; 6-Don't know; 7-Refused to answer

46. Do you have a spouse or partner living with you today? If "yes" record answer to question 10.
Race: 1-African American or Black; 2-American

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London Properties
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Merced Community Action Agency
Merced Association of Realtors
Merced College
Merced County Behavioral Health & Recovery
Merced County Human Services Agency
Merced County Rescue Mission
Merced County Sheriffs Department
Merced Housing Authority
Merced LGBTQ Alliance
Merced Police Department
Merced Rescue Mission
Merced Union High School District
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A copy of this report is available at www.MercedCoC.com.

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I. Executive Summary

A. Total Number of Homeless Persons

I. Executive Summary

There were 607 persons who were homeless on Thursday, January 24, 2019. The previous homeless count and subpopulation survey was completed in 2018 during which 514 persons were counted. A comparison of the last two counts reveals that 93 more persons were counted in 2019, which represents an increase of 18.1%.

Table 1. Comparison of 2018 and 2019 Homeless Counts

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
2018 Homeless Count	202	312	514
2019 Homeless Count	322	285	607
Difference:	+120 (59.4%)	-27 (8.6%)	+93 (18.1%)

Of the 607 persons counted, 278 adults and seven (7) children were unsheltered and 221 adults and 101 children were sheltered.

It is important to note that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) limits the count to persons who are defined as

- Homeless persons living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans (these persons must be counted as unsheltered); and
- Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects (these persons must be counted as sheltered).

B. Total Number of Unsheltered and Sheltered Persons by Location

The last row in Table 2 provides a breakdown of the 607 persons by unsheltered and sheltered persons and compares the breakdown to the 2018 breakdown. There was an increase in both unsheltered and sheltered persons. Unsheltered persons increased from 298 to 312 persons, which represents nearly a 5 % increase and sheltered persons increased from 156 to 202 persons, which represents an increase of 29.5%.

Table 2 also provides a breakdown of the 607 unsheltered and sheltered persons within the incorporated and unincorporated areas in which they were counted. A comparison to the breakdown of the 2018 numbers is also noted.

Table 2. Breakdown of Unsheltered and Sheltered Persons by Area

Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas	Total Number of Unsheltered Persons				Total Number of Sheltered Persons				Total Number			
	2018	2019	Difference		2018	2019	Difference		2018	2019	Difference	
	#	#	#	%	#	#	#	%	#	#	#	%
Atwater	28	16	-12	-43	79*	94*	+15	+19	108	146	+38	+35
Cressey	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Delhi	1	4	+3	+300	0	0	0	0	1	4	+3	+300
Dos Palos	11	5	-6	-54	0	0	0	0	11	5	-6	-54
El Nido	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Gustine	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Hilmar	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Le Grande	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Livingston	4	6	+2	+50	0	0	0	0	4	6	+2	+50
Los Banos	57	49	-8	-14	0	13**	+13	-	57	62	+5	+9
Merced	187	204	+17	+9	123*	215*	-32	-26	310	295	-15	-5
Planada	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Santa Nella	3	0	-3	-300	0	0	0	0	3	0	-3	-300
Snelling	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
South Dos Palos	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Winton	21	1	-20	-95	0	0	0	0	21	1	-20	-95
Total:	312	285	-27	-9	202	322	-4	-2	514	519	+5	+1

*includes households who received motel vouchers.

**only includes households who received motel vouchers.

II. Unsheltered Persons

HUD requires the total number of unsheltered persons to be broken down by the following homeless subpopulation categories for the unsheltered adult population except for chronically homeless families and families:

- Chronically Homeless Families;
- Chronically Homeless Individuals;
- Ethnicity;
- Families;
- Men;
- Persons with HIV/AIDS;
- Persons with Mental Illness;
- Race;
- Single Individuals;
- Substance Users;
- Unaccompanied Youth Under Age 18;
- Veterans;
- Victims of Domestic Violence;
- Women; and
- Youth Ages 18 – 24.

Of the 285 persons counted as unsheltered, 278 adults and seven (7) children were unsheltered

The following table provides a breakdown of the total unsheltered adult population by gender.

Table 3. Unsheltered Adults by Gender

Gender (Adults Only):	#	%
Male	180	64.7
Female	74	26.6
Transgender	0	0.0
Non-Conforming (i.e. not exclusively male or female)	0	0.0
No Answer Recorded	24	8.6
Total:	278	100

The next table provides a breakdown of the total unsheltered adult population by ethnicity. Concerning ethnicity, HUD only requires that Hispanics or Latinos be noted. However, the Merced CoC included Southeast Asian ((Hmong, Cambodian, Taiwanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.).

Table 4. Unsheltered Adults by Ethnicity

Subpopulation (Adults Only):	#	%
Hispanic or Latino	111	39.9
Southeast Asian	1	0.4
All Others	166	59.7
Total:	278	100

The following table provides a breakdown of the total unsheltered adult population by race.

Table 5. Unsheltered Adults by Race

Subpopulation (Adults Only):	#	%
African American or Black	19	6.8
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	3.2
Asian	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.7
White	116	41.7
Multiple Races or Other	26	9.4
Did not Know or No Response was Recorded	106	38.1
Total:	278	100

The next table breaks down the total number of unsheltered adults by subpopulations based on the information gathered by the homeless count instrument, which included questions that were asked of each unsheltered adult counted.

Table 6. Unsheltered Adults by Selected Subpopulations

Subpopulation (Adults Only):	#	%
Total Unsheltered Adults:	278	100
Families	4*	---
Unaccompanied Youth Under Age 18	3	1.1
Veterans	10	3.3
Youth Age 18 to 24	13	4.7
Seniors age 62+	13	4.7
Became Homeless for the First Time During Past 12 Months	68	24.5

*four families consisted of six adults and six children.

Figure 1 contains information about persons who became homeless for the first time during the 12 months prior to the homeless count. In 2018, 64 persons answered “yes” when asked if they became homeless for the first time during the 12 months prior to the homeless count, which represented 20.9% or one of five adults.

However, in 2019, one of four (24.5%) or 68 adults became homeless for the first time during the 12 months prior to the homeless count.

Figure 1.

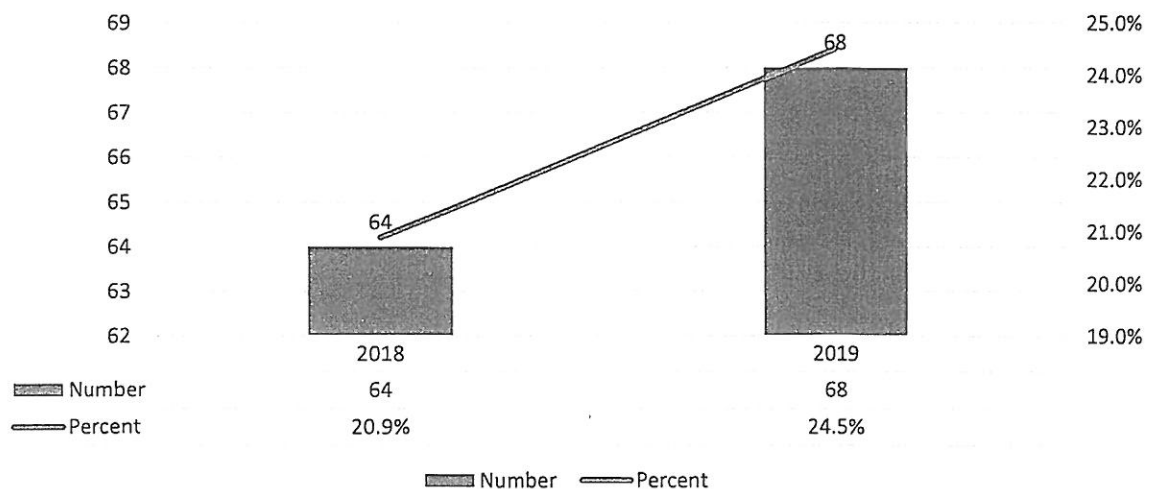


Table 7 breaks down the total number of unsheltered adults by subpopulations based on a homeless survey that was conducted after the count and administered to a sample of 80 unsheltered adults, which represents nearly a 30% sample of the 278 unsheltered adults who were counted.

Following HUD guidelines, the information gathered through the sample was used to estimate numbers of adults that fall within each subpopulation category as noted in the table below. For example, 23.8% of the unsheltered adults surveyed stated that they have a serious mental health problem. Thus, 23.8% or 66 of the 278 unsheltered adults counted were estimated to have a serious mental health problem.

Table 7: Estimates of Unsheltered Subpopulations Based on 2019 Homeless Count & 2019 Homeless Survey

Subpopulation (Adults Only):	#	%
Total Unsheltered Adults:	278	100
Chronically Homeless Families	0	0.0
Chronically Homeless Persons	129	46.3
Persons with Developmental Disabilities	76	27.5
Persons with HIV/AIDS	7	2.5
Persons with Serious Mental Health Problems	66	23.8
Persons with Physical Disabilities	136	48.8
Substance Users (on-going problem)	73	26.3
Victims of Domestic Violence	76	27.5
Currently experiencing homelessness because you are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking	11	3.8

The following findings were based on survey questions that were shaped and desired locally and not necessitated by HUD in order to determine data for required subpopulations.

Income

- 70% of unsheltered surveyed adults had a monthly income of \$250 or less.

Chronic Health Conditions

- 47.5% of unsheltered adults who completed a survey stated they have a chronic health condition such as Diabetes, Heart Trouble, High Blood Pressure, Seizures, Hepatitis, Respiratory Problems, Epilepsy, Tuberculosis, or Arthritis;
 - 26.3% of unsheltered adults stated the condition has continued for a long time or indefinitely & impede his or her ability to live independently;
- 20% of unsheltered surveyed adults who completed a survey stated they have been admitted to the emergency room or hospital once during the past 12 months;

- 35% of unsheltered adults who completed a survey stated they have been admitted to the emergency room or hospital more than once during the past 12 months.

Released from Prison

- 15% of unsheltered adults who completed a survey stated they were released from prison or jail during the past 12 months;
 - 83% were released after serving 90 days or less
 - 42% were released on parole;
 - 58% were released on probation;
 - 10% are unknown.

Times Arrested

- 16% of unsheltered adults who completed a survey stated they were arrested at least once.

III. Sheltered Persons

As required by HUD, the sheltered count included the number of persons and households sleeping in emergency shelters (including seasonal shelters), transitional housing, and Safe Haven programs (of which the County has none) that were listed on the Housing Inventory Chart (HIC). In addition, any persons staying in hotels or motels as a result of receiving a voucher from a social service agency were included in the sheltered count per HUD's instructions if the voucher program was listed on the HIC.

HUD encourages the use of Homeless Management Information Services (HMIS) data to generate sheltered counts and subpopulation data for programs with 100% of beds participating in HMIS. Thus, HMIS was used to gather the total number of occupied beds and the number of persons that provided a total number of sheltered persons and a breakdown by subpopulation for nearly all sheltered programs.

Table 9. Total Shelter Count by Program

Facility	Program:	Total # of Persons
Shelters:		
Community Action Agency	D Street Shelter	39
Merced County Human Services Agency	Motel Vouchers	162
Merced County Rescue Mission	Emergency Shelter	0
Merced County Rescue Mission	Hope Respite Care	10
Merced County Rescue Mission	Room at the Inn Shelter	5
Merced County Rescue Mission	Winter Warming Center	4
Valley Crisis Center	Domestic Violence Shelter	8
Sub-Total:		228
Transitional Housing:		
Community Social Model Advocates	Hobie House	17
Community Social Model Advocates	Tranquility Village	19
Merced County Mental Health	Parsons House	0
Merced County Rescue Mission	Hope for Men (Bridge to Hope)	8
Merced County Rescue Mission	Hope for Women (Haven of Hope)	8
Merced County Rescue Mission	Transition to Hope	39
Valley Crisis Center	Domestic Violence Transitional Hg	3
Sub-Total:		94
Total:		322

The table above reveals that nearly three-fourths—228 persons or 70.8% of the sheltered population were in shelters and more than one-fourth—94 persons, or 29.1% were in transitional housing programs.

IV. Background Information Concerning the Homeless Count

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, as part of its requirements for local jurisdictions to continue to receive continuum of care funding for homeless persons, asks local jurisdictional applicants to conduct a “one night point-in-time” homeless count every other year during the last 10 days of January.

- **When Was the Count Conducted?**

The homeless count was conducted, in accordance to HUD instructions, on the streets of Merced County during the hours of 6:30 am-8:30 am on Thursday, January 24, 2019. The count was also conducted overnight on January 23 in shelters and transitional housing programs.

- **Who was Counted?**

A person was considered homeless, and thus counted, only when he/she fell within the following HUD-based definition by residing in one of the places described below:

- a. in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings;
- b. in an emergency shelter;
- c. in transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelter.

HUD does not consider the following persons to be homeless—persons who are “doubled up,” or persons who are “near homelessness”—but considers them to be at-risk of homelessness. Following HUD’s guidelines, such persons were not included in the county’s homeless count.

The County of Merced, like many other counties, has a substantial number of households that are at-risk of becoming homeless. Twenty-three percent (23%) of Merced County residents were living below the poverty level according to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). This means that approximately 62,000 of the 272,673 County residents representing around 21,000 households are at risk of becoming homeless on a day like today.

Households living below the poverty level are at risk of becoming homeless. Because of their limited income, they frequently have to choose between paying their rent or mortgage and other daily living costs such as child care, clothing, food, health care, and transportation. The generally accepted standard for housing affordability is that households should not spend more than 30% of their incomes on rent and utilities.

Many households can become homeless because of social structural issues such as increases in rent, loss of job, and rising health care costs. In addition, personal experiences such as domestic violence, physical disabilities, mental illness, and substance abuse can cause members of a low-income household or an entire household to become homeless as well. Often, one or more of these experiences factor into a household's homelessness experience.

- **Who Conducted the Count?**

One hundred and thirty-one (131) counters carried out the street count on January 24 between the hours of 6:30 am - 8:30 am. They consisted of a wide-range of local representatives from various public and private organizations that included:

- Businesses;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Homeless and Formerly Homeless individuals;
- Local government;
- Non-profit agencies.

In addition, staff from shelters and transitional housing programs counted residents in their respective programs.

- **How Was the Count Conducted?**

The 2019 homeless count was a community-wide effort. Prior to the count, volunteers attended planning meetings and an orientation. During the planning meetings, key locations and mapping of sites were discussed in order to ensure that areas where persons congregate were identified and that efforts were made to minimize duplication.

V. Homeless Count Methodology

Counters were divided into teams and assigned areas to count. Teams assigned to areas where homeless persons were pre-identified included a homeless person or a formerly homeless person to help ensure that homeless persons would feel comfortable with counters.

The homeless count consisted of a personal contact method and an observation-only method. If the counters could not implement the personal contact method, then an observation-only method was used.

The personal contact method required counters to ask each homeless person a series of questions beginning with whether they were certain that the person they were about to count met HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.)

If not certain, counters were required to ask the following question:

- Did you sleep on the streets, in an abandoned building, tent, canopy, or vehicle last night?

If the answer was "no," they were instructed not to include the person. If the answer was "yes," they were instructed to ask the rest of the question listed on the homeless count instrument (see Appendix A).

An observation-only method was used for the following reasons:

- If a homeless person did not wish to speak to a counter, then the counter was to thank the person and complete questions 3 through 7 based on observations ONLY if the counter was certain that the person meets HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.);
- If the counter believed that a person was homeless and did not want to disturb the person because the person was sleeping, questions 3 through 7 were to be answered based on observations ONLY;
- If the counter believed that, a person was homeless and the counter felt it was unsafe to engage the person, questions 3 through 7 were to be answered based upon observations ONLY.

VI. Background Information Concerning the Homeless Survey

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the annual Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program application requires information about the following homeless subpopulations:

- Chronically Homeless Individuals;
- Chronically Homeless Families;
- Persons with HIV/AIDS;
- Persons with Mental Illness;
- Substance Abusers;
- Unaccompanied Youth Under Age 18;
- Veterans;
- Victims of Domestic Violence;
- Youth Ages 18 – 24.

Thus, a survey was compiled that asked questions in order to ensure that accurate data would be collected for each subpopulation.

In addition to the subpopulations noted above, additional questions were asked to collect data for the following subpopulations:

- Men;
 - Persons with Chronic Illness;
 - Persons with Developmental Disabilities;
 - Persons with Physical Disabilities;
 - Persons Released from Correctional Institutions;
 - Seniors;
 - Women.
-
- **When Was the Survey Conducted?**

The survey was administered at various locations during the two weeks following the count. Most surveys were administered during the first week following the count.

- **Who Was Surveyed?**

The homeless survey was administered to 80 homeless adults. The percent of adults surveyed in relationship to the homeless count is more than one of every four adults (28.8%).

Of the 80 homeless adults surveyed

- 60 or 75% were men and 20 or 25% were women.

- **Who Conducted the Survey?**

Sixteen (16) volunteers carried out the survey. They consisted of a wide-range of local representatives from various public and private organizations that included:

- Businesses;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Homeless and Formerly Homeless individuals;
- Local government;
- Non-profit agencies.

In addition, staff from shelters and transitional housing programs administered the survey to residents in their respective programs.

- **How Was the Survey Conducted?**

The process involved administering a one-on-one interview survey with a representative sample of homeless adults living in the County of Merced. There were two (2) primary methods of contact with homeless persons who participated in the survey. They were: 1) interviews with homeless persons who were contacted on the streets and 2) interviews with homeless persons who were contacted while using non-residential homeless services.

- **Where Was the Survey Conducted?**

The survey was conducted on the streets and at various residential and non-residential social service sites that participated in the homeless count.

VII. Next Steps: Implementing Recommendations to Prevent and End Homelessness

Next steps should include the following:

- focusing on ending homelessness for specific subpopulations;
- Encouraging the County and each city to work in partnership with the Merced Continuum of Care (CoC) to prevent and end homelessness within its jurisdiction; and
- implementing evidence-based, best, and promising practices that have been proven to be effective in preventing and ending homelessness.

Trying to end homelessness for nearly 300 unsheltered persons collectively can be overwhelming and discouraging. Focusing on specific subpopulations can elicit confidence because the number of a given subpopulation is much less and is more manageable. Furthermore, we can build upon the recent success towards ending homelessness among veterans.

Thus, next steps include the following six recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Finish the job of ending homelessness among unsheltered veterans

As noted below, the number of homeless veterans during a point-in-time count has decreased significantly over the past few years—from 88 to 17—according to past homeless counts.

Year	# of Unsheltered Veterans
2015	88
2016	25
2017	17
2018	13
2019	17

Of the 17 unsheltered veterans,

- 11 were counted in the City of Merced; and
- 6 in the city of Los Banos.

In order to finish the job, the following public and private organizations should continue to implement the best practices of

- Permanent supportive housing and a Housing First approach through the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, which combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.
- Rapid rehousing and a Housing First approach through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, which provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families that are currently in or transitioning to permanent housing. SSVF is designed to rapidly re-house homeless Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis.

Public and private organizations include:

- City of Merced;
- County of Merced;
- Housing Authority of the County of Merced;
- Sierra Saving Grace Homeless Project;
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Central California Health Care System – Merced;
- Westcare, San Joaquin Valley Veterans - Merced

Veterans not eligible for the HUD-VASH Voucher Program and the SSVF Program should be referred to the CoC Coordinated Entry System to be matched with the appropriate housing and supportive services.

Recommendation 2: End homelessness among unsheltered youth

The number of homeless youth age 18 – 24 has decreased during the past few years according to past homeless count data as noted in the table below. However, it is worth noting that three of the 16 unsheltered youth this year were unaccompanied youth under age 18, whereas the number of unaccompanied youth under age 18 counted in 2017 and 2018 was zero. Thirteen (13) of the 16 unsheltered youth counted this year were within the ages of 18 – 24.

Year	# of Unsheltered Youth Age 18 -24
2016	26
2017	23
2018	21
2019	16

The following table breaks down the 16 unsheltered youth by city.

City or Area	# of Unsheltered Youth Age 18 -24
Merced	7
Los Banos	4
Atwater	4
Livingston	1

In order to determine the next steps to best end homelessness among youth, the Homeless Youth Committee should have a study session with the CoC during a future CoC representatives meeting.

Recommendation 3: End homelessness among unsheltered seniors age 62+

The number of homeless seniors age 62+ who were counted as unsheltered has steadily decreased during the past few years.

Year	# of Unsheltered Seniors Age 62+
2016	21
2017	17
2018	11
2019	13

The following table breaks down seniors age 62+ by city and area.

City or Area	# of Unsheltered Seniors Age 62+
Merced	8
Los Banos	4
Atwater	1

In order to determine the next steps to best end homelessness among seniors age 62+, a new or existing committee concerning seniors should discuss next steps and make recommendations to the CoC for adoption.

Recommendation 4: End homelessness among unsheltered children and families

The CoC should adopt a no tolerance policy for children living on the streets, in vehicles, and other places not meant for human habitation and encourage each jurisdiction to do the same.

There were four families with seven children who were counted as unsheltered during the 2019 homeless count.

The following table breaks down families by city.

City or Area	# of Unsheltered Families
Merced	4

In order to determine the next steps to best end homelessness among unsheltered children and families, a new or existing committee should discuss next steps and make recommendations to the CoC for adoption.

Appendix A

Instructions for Merced County 2019 Homeless Unsheltered Count Instrument

Pre-Count Instructions

Before counting someone

1. Please Inform the person that the Merced City and County Continuum of Care is conducting a count of persons who are homeless;
2. Their participation is **completely anonymous and confidential**;
3. You are not asking for their name, social security number, or any personal information that can be linked to the participant;
4. Their participation will help provide better programs and services for people who are homeless.

Safety Comes First

If you believe a person is homeless and the individual does not wish to speak to you thank the person and complete questions 3 through 7 based upon your observations ONLY if you are certain that the person meets HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.).

If you believe a person is homeless and you do not wish to disturb the person because the person is sleeping complete questions 3 through 7 based upon your observations ONLY if you are certain that the person meets HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.).

If you believe a person is homeless and if you feel it is unsafe for you to engage the person complete questions 3 through 7 based upon your observations ONLY if you are certain that the person meets HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.).

NOTE: The goal is to have all of your questions answered by at least 90% of all persons counted. Therefore, please ask each person that you are counting each question unless noted otherwise. For example, asking a question may be contingent on the answer of the previous question.

Having all questions answered with accuracy will help ensure that enough data has been collected for each subpopulation that is required by HUD for each city within the county. The less data the less chances of accurate data.

Name: _____

Merced County 2019 Homeless Count Instrument

Date: _____

City or Area: _____

Zone (if applicable): _____

Describe location: _____

Questions: (NOTE: if person is sleeping or you feel unsafe ONLY complete gray shaded questions based on observation)	Person 1	Spouse/ Partner	Person 2	Spouse/ Partner	Person 3	Spouse/ Partner	Person 4	Spouse/ Partner
1. Circle "yes" if you are certain that the person you are about to count and survey meets HUD's criteria of sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., sidewalk, abandoned building, tent, vehicle, park bench, etc.) If not certain, ask question 2 before asking other questions.	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
2. Did you sleep on the streets, or in an abandoned building, tent, canopy, or vehicle last night? (do not count the person if the person states that he or she slept in a shelter or transitional housing program? If the answer to question 2 is "no," then record "no" and do not ask other questions.	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
3. First Initial of First Name Only								
4. First Initial of Last Name Only								
5. What is your gender? (Record M = Male; F = Female; T = Transgender; O=Gender Non-Conforming (i.e. not exclusively male or female)								
6. Age: please record number for age group: 1=(under 18) 2=(18 to 24) 3=(25 to 49) 4=(50 to 54) 5=(55 to 61) 6=(62 to 69) 7=(70 to 79) 8=(80+).								
7. What is Your Race? (please read the race code at bottom of page before recording)								
8. Are You Hispanic or Latino?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
9. Are you Southeast Asian (Hmong, Cambodian, Taiwanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
10. In what state were you born? Abbreviate state (i.e., CA=California) If born outside the U.S. only abbreviate country (i.e., MX=Mexico, CAN=Canada)								
11. Have you served in the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard)? If the person does not respond leave this column unanswered.	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
12. Were you ever called into active duty as a member of the National Guard or as a Reservist? If person does not respond leave column unanswered.	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
13. Have you ever received healthcare or benefits from a Veterans Administration medical center? If person does not respond or know leave blank.	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
14. Did you become homeless for the first time during the past 12 months?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
15. Do you have children under the age of 18 who are homeless and living with you on the streets today? (record number of children; if none note "0")								
16. Do you have a spouse or partner* living with you today? If "Yes," record answers to same questions for spouse or partner in the next column								
Race: 1=African American or Black; 2=American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3=Asian; 4=Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 5=White; 6=Multiple Races or Other; 7=don't know; and 8=refused to answer								

2019 Merced County Homeless Subpopulation Survey

Today's Date: _____ Name of Interviewer: _____ Location: _____

1. Did you sleep outdoors, in an abandoned building, tent, canopy, or vehicle last night?
☐ yes ☐ no (If no, stop asking questions)
2. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Non-Conforming (i.e., not exclusively M or F)
3. Are you Hispanic or Latino? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
4. What is your race? ☐ African American or Black ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ Multiple Races or Other ☐ Don't Know ☐ Refused
5. Are you Southeast Asian (Hmong, Cambodian, Taiwanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
6. What is your age: ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18–24 ☐ 25–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–55 ☐ 55 –61 ☐ 62 – 64 ☐ 65+
7. Did you become homeless for the first time during the past 12 months?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
8. Have you been living in a shelter and/or on the streets or in abandoned buildings for the past year or more?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
9. Have you stayed in a shelter or lived on the streets at least 4 separate times in last 3 years?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
10. If yes to #9, was the combined length of time for these occasions at least 12 months?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
11. Have you served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces or called into active duty in National Guard or a Reservist? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
12. If yes to #11, Has a healthcare provider ever said you have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
13. Do you have a long-lasting physical disability? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
14. Do you have a long-lasting developmental disability? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
15. Do you have an on-going drug or alcohol problem that limits your ability to live independently?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
16. If yes to #15, has it continued for a long time or indefinitely? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
17. Do you feel you have a serious mental health problem that limits your ability to live independently?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
18. If yes to #17, has it continued for a long time or indefinitely? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
19. Do you have a chronic health condition such as Diabetes, Heart Trouble, High Blood Pressure, Seizures, Hepatitis, Respiratory Problems, Epilepsy, Tuberculosis, or Arthritis? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
20. If yes to #19, has it continued for a long time or indefinitely & impede your ability to live independently?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
21. In the past 12 months, how many times have you been admitted to the emergency room or hospital? ____
22. Have you been diagnosed with AIDS or tested positive for HIV? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
23. Ever been a victim of domestic violence by an intimate partner? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
24. Are you currently experiencing homelessness because you are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking?
25. How much is your monthly income? ☐ \$0.00; ☐ \$1-\$250; ☐ \$251-\$500; ☐ \$500-\$1,000; ☐ more than \$1,000
26. Were you released from prison or jail during the past 12 months? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
27. If yes to #25, were you released after serving 90 days or less? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ refused
28. When released, were you placed on ☐ probation or ☐ parole ☐ don't know ☐ refused
29. How many times were you arrested during the past 12 months? _____